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C O N F I D E N T I A L RABAT 001093

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/05/2011
TAGS: [IR](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PBTS](#) [PINR](#) [MO](#)
SUBJECT: THE FOREIGN MINISTER AND THE U.S. STATEMENT ON IRAN

REF: A. STATE 87682
[1](#)B. RABAT 01043

Classified By: Ambassador Thomas T. Riley, reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (C) On the margins of a meeting with Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy Karen Hughes, the Ambassador met with Foreign Minister Benaissa on June 5 to reinforce the May 31 conversation the DCM had with the MFA Secretary General Omar Hilale on the U.S. Statement on Iran (eftels A and B). The Ambassador emphasized the .S. desire for diplomacy to succeed with Iran and the importance of Secretary Rice's May 31 announcement saying that the U.S. is willing to join with the United Kingdom, France and Germany in negotiations with Iran. The Ambassador underscored the importance of a public statement by the Government of Morocco (GOM) in support of the USG's important step and for its willingness to reach out to Iran in combination with members of the European Union.

[1](#)2. (C) The Ambassador also mentioned statements attributed to Benaissa in the press about Morocco-Iran relations following the foreign ministers of the Non-Aligned Movement meeting in Malaysia. The Ambassador urged Benaissa to use his influence with Iran to support U.S. and international efforts for a diplomatic solution. Under Secretary Hughes underlined the importance of this move for the U.S. Benaissa immediately said he did not approve, but he also did not deny, the May 31 statement's release in which he reportedly called for closer Moroccan-Iranian ties. (Note: The release, attributed to a Malaysian news source, says: "Speaking in a meeting with his Iranian counterpart Manouchehr Mottaki, he (Benaissa) underlined the need to create proper grounds for upgrading ties and open a new chapter of cooperation between the two countries. He (Benaissa) pointed to the significance of the potentials of both countries in two strategic regions and said that expansion of ties between Islamic states is important. Meanwhile, he declared that his country is willing to increase such cooperation. At the meeting, the Moroccan foreign minister invited Mottaki to visit his country." End Note.) Benaissa made clear that he did not think highly of the Iranian president, and regarded him as uncultured. He said Iranian Foreign Minister Mottaki had made clear the limitations of his role as foreign minister in Iran's current political climate.

[1](#)3. (C) Comment: Benaissa was likely currying favor by disparaging the Iranian president. Benaissa continued the conversation by reiterating his long-standing view that the

Mission's perceived contact with unidentified "Islamists" is not productive, e.g., "they hate the U.S. and they are undermining the GOM." Benaissa recommended that the Mission ignore them. (Note: Benaissa may have been referring to the Justice and Charity Organization (JCO). He was probably not referring to the Justice and Development Party (PJD), as he usually names the party. End Note.) Benaissa also underscored for Under Secretary Hughes the importance of the Western Sahara to the GOM. He requested the support of the USG for Morocco's efforts on the Western Sahara, which he called the "lifeblood" of Morocco. End Comment.

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Riley